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AUGUST 15 2005

SPECIAL REPORT

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ALL SHOOK UP
The spirit of rock 'n' roll con-Dia Preley burns bright at the annual Collingwood Indie festival. View the photos in our online gallery: www.macleans.ca/gallery

TERROR AFTERMATH
For ongoing coverage of the investigations into the London terror attacks, visit www.macleans.ca/londonbombing

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Chandra (with her husband, Ashish, at home in Mississauga) believes, 'We have to be Canadians first'

abused labourers in Asia—endless Canadian and American manufacturing jobs. We are all being reduced to consumers of cheap commodities that end up on our landfills. Maybe founder Sam Wilson's bigger picture also included welcoming more poor people who lost their manufacturing jobs and could shop and work at Wal-Mart. Founder John Satterthwaite, Mississauga Ont.

Validation for new immigrants

Thank you, Peter C. Newman for giving us such an uplifting portrait of "third wave" immigrants and multi-millionaire Raj Singh Chhadha ("The man long of Montreal," Special Report, July 25). One has to look long and hard to find someone like this one that validates what we know in our hearts to be true: the vast majority of immigrants are hard-working, law-abiding, proud Canadians. Stuart Griggs, Mississauga

Perhaps the Honourable Raj Singh Chhadha would consider seeing some of his wealth go toward welcoming more in rural Canadian cities for new immigrants. ESL could be taught, and I, for one, would volunteer as part of a welcoming committee. And perhaps he could endow a foundation to promote tolerance, peace and understanding at his alma mater, Concordia University. Laura Vass, Toronto

Chhadha's comment, "We weren't here before, it's a Muslim, it's a Sikh, it's a Jew" ... we have to be Canadians first is nothing new. My parents emigrated to

Canada in the 1930s from eastern Europe. They were a visible minority then. They dressed differently, were poor and uneducated, did not speak English, and struggled to survive. These early immigrants were expected to integrate into the Canadian mainstream culture, and they did so gracefully. Fostering loyalty to one's cultural background as religious beliefs, combined with the active promotion by government and activist groups of pride in being a nation of minorities, is not only far less dangerous.

M. P. Langston, Vancouver

Barking with the big dogs

Regarding your negative story on big-misfit types ("The hounds from hell," Dogs, July 18), I would like to say that any dog of any size that is uncontrolled and untrained is in the wrong hands and has the potential to be dangerous. Responsible breeders screen their potential puppy owners carefully.

During the interview process, it offensively becomes apparent which buyers are looking for a dog with which they can terrorize the neighbours. In referring to the Caucasian owtchaka, writer Barbara Rayburn quoted a website known for its hype: "This breed will inevitably guard

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**UPFRONT****Survival** | A packed airliner crashes, and everyone lives

They're calling it a miracle, as if divine intervention somehow spared all 309 souls aboard Air France Flight 358 when it skidded off the runway at Toronto's Pearson International Airport, broke in three and was gutted by a spectacular fire. Really, though, the passengers and crew on the wide-bodied Airbus A 340, inbound from Paris, were just plain lucky. They were fortunate the plane didn't break apart more than it did when it plowed into a runway 200 m past the runway, and that the flames didn't spread more quickly. Also, that there were no serious injuries during the wild landing to clear the evacuation. By most accounts, passengers were led or jumped off the crippled airliner in about two minutes, no miracle there, just pure professional skill.

In the end, only 13 people suffered relatively minor injuries, including broken bones. The big question though: why did it happen? Air Flight 358 decended, but was under a red alert due to violent thunderstorms, although pilots could land if they thought it was safe. When the time hit the runway, some passengers clapped, thinking they were home free. Lightning might have hit the plane. The cabin lights went out. There were reports of abrupt wind shifts, which may have pushed the jet too far down the runway. One witness said the jet landed midway down the runway. But lead investigator Rod Levesque cautioned "an accident seldom happens as a result of one cause."

With the flames doused, came a flood of questions: Was there a computer malfunction? Mechanical failure? Misjudgment by the pilot or air traffic control? Was there too much rainwater on the runway, causing the giant Airbus to hydroplane? Only the investigators can say, and their work has just begun. For now, it's enough to be thankful.

BARRY D. KAWAL/ESPRESSO

Quote of the week | "That was the ride of the century."American astronaut **STEPHEN BORDEN** flies a couple of flies on the underside of the space shuttle Discovery while dangling from the end of Canadarm2, 366 km above Earth.**ScoreCard****SHRAPNY**

DNA-obsessed South Koreans have a twisted notion, claim: world's first cop, said to be a very difficult animal to replicate. That crew odd: an Afghan house (Shrapny). Eighty cruise supermodel said known for brains or compassion. A real shrapny-dog chug.

**ATKINS QUIT**

Cert-hating purveyor of calorie-labeled Atkins diet goes belly up, files for bankruptcy protection. Protein-promoting mini-maker says it's filed down a long but doesn't have enough bread to pay its debts. Dollars in diagnostics, another bid that will take its place.

**IRANS ISLAND**

Fancy island. Shaking wastes to disperse risk off Greenland to prevent sovereignty Canada won't let go. One solution: station our new suits on there, they don't leave much anyway.

**THE CRC**

LPT's 16th, with 16th-century broadcaster Michael Jean as the head OG. Mc Corp has been the leading ground for four of the past five heads of state: Jean, Adrienne Clarkson, Roméo LeBlanc and Jacques Chirac. Can't wait for Mrs. Murphy's turn.

WORLD

SUDAN The troubled North African nation has been trying to get over 23 years of civil war, but ethnic divisions were ripped open again when First Vice president John Ganyu, a former rebel leader from the north, was killed in a suspicious helicopter crash. Ganyu had only been sworn into office as July 9 in an attempt at unity between the mostly Arab government in Khartoum and disenchanted Africans from the south. His supporters did not believe government mourners the crash was an accident—four days after the killing was Jan. 28, 2004.

HAQ At least 30 U.S. military personnel were killed in one of the bloodiest weeks of insurgent attacks in recent months. Fourteen Marines died in a single incident—a roadside bombing near Haidra that destroyed an armored troop carrier. U.S. authorities said the attack showed insurgents were able to create increasingly sophisticated bombs from recycled artillery-grade explosives.

Other news in the war on terror wasn't much better. Senior military officers staged a coup in Myanmar, one of the very few Muslim countries to support the U.S. and Israel, and it wasn't clear if the new regime would maintain those controversial ties. Uzbekistan, angry that Washington was siding with Uzbek reformers, gave the U.S. six months to vacate a key military base used to fight the Taliban in nearby Afghanistan.



TO BOLDLY GO

TO BOLDLY GO In the first step of Concordwest, U.S. aerospace giant Boeing sent a new view of the aerospace giant's response to a crisis of trust: flag cloth from the belly of the space shuttle *Discovery*. NASA traced the exposed insulation, night-sight coordinates during *Discovery*'s re-entry and set off the alarm reaction that destroyed space ship *Columbia* and its seven-member crew in February 2003. Boeing's dramatic, and unscripted, spin, again played these concerns, but NASA is grounding all shuttle fleet for the foreseeable future, anyway, despite two years of serious scrutiny and \$681.8 million in safety upgrades. *Discovery*'s July 26 launch showed initial signs of resolution. www.boeing.com

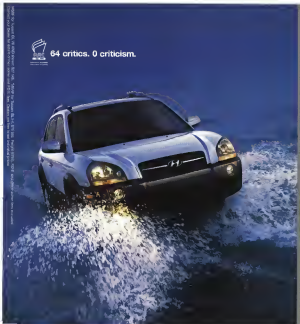
Only in Britain was there a measure of forward movement. Scotland Yard now has in custody all four suspects from the second wave of rampant bombers, whose real bombs did not go off, along with at least 10 others.

One of the five, Harrell Isaac, 27, captured in Rome, has an older brother, Abdul Isaac, 32, living in Toronto whom he claims downtown office towers. Harrell was reported to have said his group had no connection to the first wave of suicide bombers who killed 52 on July 7, and was only interested to send a protest message about Iraq.

Private Minister Tony Blair, meanwhile, unveiled new measures to override human rights laws and make it easier to deport or exclude Islamic radicals. He also said he would consider closing down mosques that

SWINE Flu China is preparing vaccine to inoculate 10 million pigs after a particularly virulent outbreak of swine flu in the central province of Sichuan killed at least 36 people and left hundreds sick with horrendous internal bleeding and necrotizing. Experts said this type of swine bacteria usually does not afflict humans in such a serious way.

SENATOR Stymied by Democrats for nearly five months, George W. Bush used the



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summer break to get around Congress and appoint the blunt U.S. ambassador to the world body. Under the so-called noosa appointment, Bolton should be able to keep the job at least until January 2007, when it becomes renewable again.

BURNES German police were considering murder charges against a 39-year-old woman in a rural community near Poland after the bodies of nine newborns were found buried in a garden and in flower pots. The woman told investigators she had only vague recollections of giving birth as she was very drunk every time.

HEARD OF SAUD The funeral was modest, the transition smooth. One of the world's richest men, King Fahd, 84, of Saudi Arabia was buried in a simple ceremony, in an unmarked desert grave, in befitting the country's austere religious mores. Fahd was succeeded by his half-brother, the former crown prince, King Abdullah, 61, who had been the country's de facto ruler in recent years during Fahd's illness. The new king must now wrestle with governing royal family that is top heavy with 70- and 80-year-olds.

CANADA

HOLMOGA The Montreal World Film Festival will not premiere after all the Hollywood dramas *Karla*, the story of Olympic triathlete Karla Homolova and Paul Bernardo. Facing opposition from sponsors, reportedly including Air Canada, the festival opted what was to be one of its main drawing cards. The film will not be screened in conventional theaters in the fall.

WAKEUPCALL The Vancouver Port Authority appears to have found a way around the five-week truckers' strike that has left nearly 25,000 containers piled up at Canada's biggest west coast entry point. In a controversial move, the authority effectively

regulated trucking trucks facing trucking companies to have a temporary 90-day license to retrieve their merchandise. The license requires them to pay truckers the wage increase set by a mediator.

MEDICARE The Supreme Court gave Quebec a year's grace to redesign its health care system to accommodate private insurance plans. The province had asked for more time after the Supreme Court ruled in June that Quebec had to open its system to private insurers to cut down on waiting times.

OPICIDS Health Canada warned that combining alcohol with abuse-reducing prescription known as opoids can be fatal and is requesting drug companies provide more safety data. The warning follows incidents surrounding a U.S. drug called Palladone XL, which isn't available in Canada. But Ottawa said the condition may apply to similar popular drugs such as Oxycontin and MS Contin SR.

ON-OWL Buoyed by the unofficial peace success of beating the recent world aquatic championships, Mayor Grégoire Tremblay suggested Montreal might bid for the 2006 Summer Olympics. The city is still paying off the debt from the 1976 Games.

POLITICS Stephen Harper suggested a Conservative government may not go along with the Kyoto climate accord. But he and his party still seem to reduce pollution and will allow public transit users to claim part of the cost of a monthly pass on tax returns.

PREGNANT A 16-year-old Calgary girl who recently gave birth under duress and put her newborn son out with the trash last year was given a year's probation. She is now making the boy with the help of her mother. A physician found the infant. The judge said the teen, who maintained she conceived the pregnancy because her single mom was going through a hard time, seemed successful.

SCHOOL BELL It is the biggest Canadian experiment in year-round schooling and to popular enrollment had to be capped. Roberta Bender Public School in Brampton, Ont., began its new school year last week, barely a month after summer vacation started. The almost 1,100 students from kindergarten to Grade 8 will get more time off during October, February and March. Educators say the schedule will offset what they call learning loss caused by a overly long summer break.

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THE MACLEAN'S INTERVIEW



hows later. After the war, Smith returned to a hero's welcome in his hometown, New Westminster, B.C. He married photographer Esther Weisen in 1947 and he enlisted during the Korean War. The couple raised two children and operated a travel company in Vancouver. Esther died in 1994. In a last interview with *Maclean's* earlier this year, he spoke with Vancouver *Burnside* Chief Kim MacQueen.

Why did you enlist in the army?

I first tried the air force. They accepted me, but said I had to wait six months. I said, in six months the goddamn war will be over. I figured the Seaforths were going somewhere so I joined and I was gone a week. I figured the war would be over in three months and I'd see Europe without paying for it. Six years later, I was still seeing Europe.

You were a solid man, right?

Oh, yeah. I didn't take orders. I didn't believe in them.

hey, you were in the wrong job.

I was in the right job. I've met some fine officers, but some weren't worth a shit.

Interview | ERNEST "SMOKY" SMITH

'I WAS NEVER AFRAID TO SHOOT, THAT'S WHAT I WAS PAID FOR'

Did you feel that your actions that day would earn you the Victoria Cross?

I just knew we were going into action. I didn't know what it was. I was with my crew, guys that I could trust, and we took up our positions and stayed there, all night and all day, hitting Germans and landing off tanks. Pan and guns. Every day had risk as far as I was concerned. People were shooting at you all the time. One day looks like another.

What was going through your mind? Did you have the time to be scared?

Oh, shit, yeah. You go for a tank, you've got to win, 'cause if you don't put it out of commission, the tank will eat ya. It has part of the track and the motor, too. It was the only way of stopping them.

That was the good ones. The bad ones was the 18 German soldiers behind it. That's right. They came after us with hand

PRIVATE ERNEST "SMOKY" SMITH, who died last week in Vancouver at 98, was Canada's last living recipient of the Victoria Cross, the Commonwealth's highest award for valor. He was also the kind of hellfighter who drove superior officers in the Seaforth Highlanders to distraction during their long, deadly campaign through German-occupied Italy. On many of those days, a half-truck was just what was needed. The custom describes his

heroic defense of a vital bridgehead across Italy's Sarno River during a furious enemy counterattack on Oct. 21-22, 1944. Using a Tommy gun, anti-tank weapons and whatever he could scrounge, he wiped out two

German self-propelled guns and a Panther tank, killed four attacking soldiers, repelled six others, carried a wounded comrade—under fire—to medical and, then returned to guard the southern reinforcements arrived.



ROGERS
Your World Right Now

PHOTOGRAPH BY KYLE COBB

MACLEAN'S | AUGUST 28, 2008 | 29

ERNEST "SMOKY" SMITH
FLARE
fashion magazine

grenades. I just kept shooting them.

I guess you had no alternative. You could put your hands up and die.

You could have surrendered, become a prisoner of war.
No bloody way. Wouldn't even think of it. People who surrender, they're cowards.

You killed four and the rest fled?
Yeah, it was too hot for 'em. I'm a good shot with a machine gun.

Did that battle achieve its objective?
That's why I got the VC. It changed the whole picture of the front, they all saw. It made it so the rest of the army got through.

When they took you off the front to award you the medal, they locked you up before flying you to London to meet King George VI. What did they think you'd do?

I got locked up in Naples. They just wanted Smokey to be in the right spot. When I was first locked up, I was thinking, what the hell? But then they gave me a couple of beers and I was very happy.

What was it like to meet the king?

It was kind of amazing. I go to Buckingham Palace and I say to the guard, "What am I supposed to do?" He says, "You do exactly what the king does from the lips!" I said, "Oh Christ, you think I'm going to do that, you're crazy!" I just sat there and that was it.

I was given the VC and told to put it in my pocket. I wasn't allowed to wear it for at least three days so the Canadian newspapers would have it the same time as the British ones. So for three days, I'm sitting in a bar in London drinking to heart hell. Someone came and said, "Glad, Smokey, you can put on that medal now." So I took it out and put it on my chest, and I never bought another drink that day.

You've since met many VC winners. What makes these guys different?
You get in that position where you've got to fight. Somebody's got to fight, you can't sit at home. They've got a job to do.

Lots of people did the same job in the war—there has to be something different. Cuzy [Laughs] They were all crazy.



Smokey with Paul Martin in the Netherlands in May, displaying his VC.

You returned to Italy in the fall of 1944 for 60th anniversary celebrations. Did it bring back memories?

None that I care about. There really are no good memories. You're fighting every day, for Christ's sake. Every day.

Do you look back at that rocky soldier with the gun and marvel that it was you?

Thank God it was me. I always say most soldiers were afraid to shoot. I was never afraid to shoot. I'd kill the bastards. That's what you're paid for.

Do you hold any animosity to the people you were fighting?

Why should I? They had a job to do, too. Hope they got more than 60 cents a day.

That's really all the army paid?



I think you were \$1.20 a day or something, but I was only allowed half. You could have deferred pay. I got pay after half when the war was over. \$1,500. I went to Vancouver and got drunk for a month and spent my \$1,500.

Have you followed the war in Iraq?
I don't keep track of it. They've got gas now, Christ, that could blow a whole city up. It's a different thing now.

You recently had the cantenae named after you at your local Legion, a rare honour. Do you still like a beer?
I don't drink beer any more. I have a couple of glasses of wine.

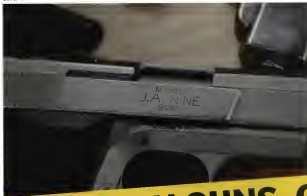
Wine is better for the heart.
Yeah, that's what they told me. Didn't have to tell me twice.

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¹MSRP \$38,900. Excludes taxes, destination, freight, and dealer fees. ²Optional. ³Optional. ⁴Optional. ⁵Optional. ⁶Optional. ⁷Optional. ⁸Optional. ⁹Optional. ¹⁰Optional. ¹¹Optional. ¹²Optional. ¹³Optional. ¹⁴Optional. ¹⁵Optional. ¹⁶Optional. ¹⁷Optional. ¹⁸Optional. ¹⁹Optional. ²⁰Optional. ²¹Optional. ²²Optional. ²³Optional. ²⁴Optional. ²⁵Optional. ²⁶Optional. ²⁷Optional. ²⁸Optional. ²⁹Optional. ³⁰Optional. ³¹Optional. ³²Optional. ³³Optional. ³⁴Optional. ³⁵Optional. ³⁶Optional. ³⁷Optional. ³⁸Optional. ³⁹Optional. ⁴⁰Optional. ⁴¹Optional. ⁴²Optional. ⁴³Optional. ⁴⁴Optional. ⁴⁵Optional. ⁴⁶Optional. ⁴⁷Optional. ⁴⁸Optional. ⁴⁹Optional. ⁵⁰Optional. ⁵¹Optional. ⁵²Optional. ⁵³Optional. ⁵⁴Optional. ⁵⁵Optional. ⁵⁶Optional. ⁵⁷Optional. ⁵⁸Optional. ⁵⁹Optional. ⁶⁰Optional. ⁶¹Optional. ⁶²Optional. ⁶³Optional. ⁶⁴Optional. ⁶⁵Optional. ⁶⁶Optional. ⁶⁷Optional. ⁶⁸Optional. ⁶⁹Optional. ⁷⁰Optional. ⁷¹Optional. ⁷²Optional. ⁷³Optional. ⁷⁴Optional. ⁷⁵Optional. ⁷⁶Optional. ⁷⁷Optional. ⁷⁸Optional. ⁷⁹Optional. ⁸⁰Optional. 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AMERICAN GUNS, CANADIAN VIOLENCE

Weapons are crossing the border by the thousands, writes CHARLIE GILLIS, and the number of people wounded and killed in this country is mounting

JOHN BUTCHER had fallen on hard times. His wife of 35 years had died after a lengthy battle with multiple sclerosis. He'd lost his job in the financial services industry. He'd run out of money and, in his late 50s, the cigar-smoking man had been forced to move in with his daughter. With only an entry-level job at a golf course and moonlight gigs as frontman of a blues band to ease his loneliness, he felt like a burden. So when a close friend approached him with a steady sounding proposition—\$300 per trip to

square envelopes stuffed with U.S. cash into Canada from Detroit—he undidled hard and accepted. "I was told that at my age, I would never be involved with anything that would result in a jail sentence," he says. Cloning at his own risk—adultery is a crime in some states at the Toronto East Detention Centre—he now works at this thought with hollow laughter.

Between delivery meetings of prison-issue biologics and his, Butcher, now 62,

unspools his tale of self-inflicted woes. He did in fact make two trips with money in early 2004, crossing the border without incident and pocketing his fee in cash. But on his third trip, Canadian customs officers stopped him at the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel and searched him 1991 Pontiac Bonfire. There, in the space beneath the spare tire in his trunk, they found 23 high-powered handguns, including a TEC-9 semi-automatic, a weapon notorious within the law

enforcement community for its tendency to spring bullets like water from a garden hose. Butcher maintains he had no idea he was carrying a small arsenal. "If I had, I would have thrown those obscenities into the Detroit River."

Bar-grooming buys only so much mercy when you're imprisoned in Canada's gun-running epidemic. Although the court accepted Butcher's claim that the guns were planted, he was sentenced to 2½ years in jail, emerging last month. The whole experience has left him bitter, and from time

Clockwise from above: 8-mm handgun, shooting scene in a Toronto apartment building, Surrey, B.C., RCMP with second arrest, Sheppard in hospital





to time, another takes over—in the case, the Crown, the illegal gun traders who drew him into their web. But nearly his hands soon on himself. “If ever there was an Olympic medal for vigilance,” he says, “I would have won gold.”

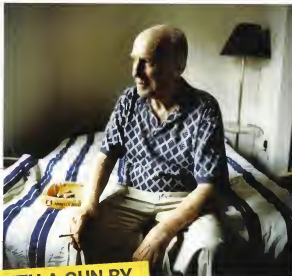
STUPIDITY, to be sure: that if the summer of 2005 has taught Beacher anything, it's that he was a pawn in a much larger bloodier, business. In the past two weeks, five people have been killed and 12 injured

in over 14 recent shootings in Toronto, and scattered incidents from a downtown square

remains to point a finger south. Mayor David Miller, among whom are listed on the 12 to 15 as various scenes of gang-related weapons on Canadian streets, saying the guns that come over the border are “very easily accessible to those kinds of thugs.”

If the experience of Canada's border agents is anything to go by, Miller is right. In the

gang-related killings since the mid-1990s, the one glaring exception to Canada's overall decline in violent crime. At the same time, handguns have been mostly replacing long-barreled guns as weapons of choice in gun homicides, reflecting what experts see as a critical shift in the nature of violent crime in Canada. “Overall, there are more gang and drug-related killings, and fewer family killings,” says Tim Gabor,



Two years ago, police on the West Coast managed smuggling operations after U.S. au-

thors have taken a slightly historical time. After one shooting in July, a woman threw to homicide detective and it had become “over-simplistic” to stick to guns during investigations, adding that “people would rather be caught with a gun by police than be caught without one by a rival.” Best officers in Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal tell similar stories—more incidents involving guns, more seizures of prohibited weapons, more arrests of unlicensed gun

violence. Last year, police in Vancouver searched a public alarm after investigating three shootings in four days, two of which were first.

Not all the pain used as such

‘PEOPLE WOULD RATHER BE CAUGHT WITH A GUN BY POLICE THAN BE CAUGHT WITHOUT ONE BY A RIVAL’

in 14 separate shootings in Toronto, including one that sent a four-year-old boy to hospital with four bullet wounds, and another that watched late-night revelers from a downtown square. The unrelenting stream of gunplay drew alarmed reaction from politicians, including Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, and it didn't take long for

past five years, authorities have seized more than 5,400 firearms entering into the country from the United States, a figure believed to represent a fraction of the northward flow. The last share of those weapons—some 3,685—were handguns, which tells you something about who was doing the buying. Finally, after all, we see the tools of the urban street gang, and its threshold growth in

a University of Ottawa criminologist. “Those involved in the former seem to have a preference for handguns, many of which are unregistered and likely smuggled into the country.”

Further down could be considered Exhibit A: the so-called friend who resisted him to seagull oath, he says, turned out to have indirect connections to the notorious Malvern Crew, a gang of drugs rained

for the past of suburban Toronto where they've spent the past couple of years doing drugs and terrorizing the public. Justice Timothy Lapsen, the Ontario court judge who sentenced Burthor, concluded that the weapons he was carrying were to be sold to “gang members in Scarborough” for purposes of “the drug trade and for protection.”

But it's not the only example, and some recent cases suggest growing demand for weapons in gangs for military-style assault weapons

thieves spotted someone with a backpack crossing the border outside Blaine, Wash., and alerted the RCMP. The Montreal gun store and eventually recovered a bag containing 12 semi-automatic weapons, along with two U.S. submachine guns. The culprits

Such cases make it easier to understand why precisely every cop on the street these days seems to be focused on body armor, and why police call for

Down on his back, Hatcher thought he was being paid to move cash, not arms.

how a lot of guns in Windsor? To come across this money in our community is unnerving."

UNNERVING enough, you'd think, to make weapons smuggling a major diplomatic issue between Canada and the United States. The connection between the gun supply in the U.S. and the criminal element in Canada is, after all, well accepted, if not well measured. In 2004, Canadian police asked the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to trace 1,232 guns seized during criminal investigations—guns they were previously confiscated in the U.S. This year, they're on pace to top that number, says Mark Carter, the ATF's attaché at the U.S. embassy in Ottawa, and while he is forbidden by law from disclosing the success rate of the search, he says gun issues represent about 80 per cent of his office's work these days. A good thing, too, according to the RCMP-led National Weapons Enforcement Support Team, a unit formed to combat gun smuggling. Fully 94 per cent of crime guns they seized on Vancouver streets in 2003 came from the U.S., while other studies suggest one out of two handgun seizures in Canadian cities are smuggled into the country.

Moreover, hardly a day goes without news of some shooting in a Canadian city—often gang-related and too often demanding to investigate bystanders like Shaquana Cadogan, the 36-year-old from Toronto. The Nalvern Crew came under public scrutiny last year after a stray bullet flew through the wall of a home on north Keele, killing Derek "Big" Van, 40, and later when an innocent 23-year-old, Oscar Morley, was gunned down on a city sidewalk. The four-day spate of shootings in Vancouver that prompted so much attention last year claimed the life of a man walking on a downtown street during rush hour (police believe he had run out of gas). In Montreal, a 30-year-old man was wounded 18 months ago during a gang showdown outside an apartment block.

Why, then, is gun smuggling not a top-level subject in the ongoing negotiations to strengthen border controls? If Washington complains of terrorist cells operating north of the border, or hydroponic pot pouring southward, surely Canada has a legitimate gripe about U.S. guns endangering its police and creating a lethal environment in its cities. Where is the deal, *gun*?

The answer, of course, lies in the diplomatic and moral imbalance that has always defined

Canada-U.S. relations. While the U.S. leans heavily on Ottawa to harmonize its immigration screening and border security to weed out terrorists, Canada must focus on protecting its \$400-billion trade relationship with the U.S., and has little leverage for its own demands. "This would be very hard to bring any kind of bilateral agenda," says Nigel Sturt, an expert in Canada-U.S. relations at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. "There's just no consistency in the United States to support it at a federal level." One problem is money. Even if the ATF wants more funds for law-enforcement operations, says Sturt, a peak scholar at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, "the answer's going to be 'okay, get it lost'."

Another problem is America's ongoing love affair with firearms, which gun-control advocates say breeds it to the fears of its neighbors. The latest statistics indicate there's a gun in America for nearly every one of the country's 289 million people, and the anti-firearms lobby is getting louder

with Republicans in control of Congress and the White House. While the ATF and other agencies have worked diligently to help Canadian police, the sheer volume of firearms south of the border makes their work appear futile. To John Howard, executive director of the Washington-based Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, this alone justifies Ottawa seeking to move into American affairs. "We need to hear from our own citizens who say, 'We've done all we can. We need help,'" he says. "You have a role in this debate."

Canada could try some practical measures, too, starting with a tougher approach to Americans who try crossing the border with weapons. "Bringing a gun into Canada right now can get you a fine as low as \$500 or \$400," says Wendy Cohen, president of the Toronto-based Coalition for Gun Control and a professor of justice studies at York University. "On the illegal market, the same gun would sell for more than that." Ottawa could also broaden its successful experiments with special, bi-national police units that

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Feb. 16, 2005 Gunfire at the parking lot of Toronto's Trinity College Institute left an 18-year-old bystander shot in the abdomen. Four young men were arrested.

April 5, 2005 16-year-old Richard David Lat was killed by a stray bullet during an altercation at a Sarnia, B.C., pub. Jagdeep Singh was convicted of his murder.

Aug. 16, 2003 A violent confrontation at the Left Six nightclub in Vancouver between bikers and Indo-Canadian gangsters left 10 people injured, 12 dead and two other bystanders injured.

April 21, 2004 A stray bullet from a nearby gunbattle shattered Louise Rasmussen, 46, the 46-year-old mother stood in line at a Toronto salad-wash shop.

Aug. 5, 2004 Gun fire during a Montreal



street fight left an innocent victim in the arms. Six young men were killed.

Nov. 26, 2004 Shaquana Carter, 31 (left), was shot in the face by a stray bullet when a man opened fire on a Toronto bus.

July 15, 2005 Shaquana Carter, 29, was able to save his four-year-old brother before he was executed in a hail of bullets by two gunmen at Toronto. But a 15-year-old male bystander was shot and wounded.

July 30, 2005 A family argument on the Siksha First Indian, near of Calgary, resulted in a 34-month-old boy being shot in the head while seated in a stroller. His 38-year-old uncle was charged.

Aug. 2, 2005 Outside a hot Toronto night, four-year-old Shaquana Cadogan and three others were wounded in a drive-by shooting. A 23-year-old man has been charged.

Compiled by Patricia Tettie
Sources: Montreal news agencies, Toronto Police Service

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light-border crime. Canada's new 19 Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, which are made up of officers from the RCMP, Canada Border Services, U.S. Customs and the U.S. Coast Guard, operating across the country. They're been effective, say experts, by bringing intelligence and tracking technology to the border, but the strategy could prove more effective—and more divisive—over the long term.

Instead of holding Americans for their involvement in firearms, some advocates say we should make gun smuggling a keypoint issue in talks to create a continental security pact. In exchange for harmonizing immigration and entry laws to address U.S. concerns about terrorism, the theory goes, Canada could press for standards across against gun smuggling, and investment by the American intelligence border agencies to block the movement of illicit firearms. "It's a question of reciprocity of interests," says Alan Garabik, Canada's former ambassador to Washington and a long-

time philosophy on its neighbors. And Calcutt, for one, sees border integration as involving, possibly center production, in bringing guns from being smuggled northward. "There's nothing that [U.S.] administration could do to ensure they would keep guns from coming into Canada," she says, "especially if we began releasing the border. I don't believe they would have the will or the wherewithal to do anything about it."

IN THE MEANTIME, people like Ken Jones, a Canada Border Services officer based in New Brunswick, must make do with what they have—namely, technology and surveillance. At the highway car crossing between St. Stephen, N.B., and Calcutt, Maine, Jones sits inside a cell, white-truck, peering at a computer monitor as he will slowly disengage a semi-trailer carrying a large shipment. With its myriad compartments, ramps, rags and a board engine, the truck would be in ideal place to hide arms for smuggling. But at the hour

airports and seaports (St. Stephen shares its with the Port of Saint John). Moreover, the choice of which vehicles to search hangs, in part, on a border officer's ability to spot signs of malfeasance—the furtive glances, sweaty upper lips and nasal flares that strain an officer's credibility. "It can't be just a hunch," says Mary Lou Goshaw, a veteran officer with St. Stephen. "We use some proven methods, and we like to think we're putting agency good steel into a very illegal activity."

Maybe. But it's worth remembering that John Butcher crossed the border without trouble the first couple of times he tried, mostly by telling guards he was visiting friends. He believes the money he carried was proceeds from the drug trade, but he's guarded when describing how the weapons wound up in his car. The events, he says, are likely to come up in future court cases. In any event, his fingerprints were never found on any of the weapons.

'I DON'T BELIEVE THE U.S. HAS THE WILL TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT'

time supporter of co-operation among Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. "I think it's safe to say the United States has no greater interest, from a security standpoint, than its southern border." And while it's too early to suggest something as radical as a single, joint agency to operate the border, that could serve as a long-term goal, Goshaw says. "Bilateral institutions are, I think, very desirable."

It's a road Ottawa is already traveling, with the announcement of the Senior Border Declaration with the U.S. in 2001. If the government tried to add guns to the agenda, it would almost certainly find an ally in Mexico. That country is growing more vocal about gun-smuggling issues at America's southern border, since an estimated 80 per cent of its crime portfolio is in the States. But domestically, Ottawa would likely encounter stiff opposition toward greater collaboration, as the political culture remains distinctly dependent on U.S. interests for border integration. Many liberal critics in this country see the protection concept as Washington's way of imposing its own interests

hazier pulls into an inspection bay, a gate arm attached to a truck is walking up and over the top of the car's hood, sweeping the windmill from stem to stem with gamma rays. The car is then towed onto a conveyor belt back to the stall, where it produces a colour image not unlike an X-ray. We can literally see into the boat.

Then, says Jones, is the "bling-bling" of contraband-detection equipment. The X-ray and Cargo Inspection System (CIS) also activated alicorn blue line to report items inside a truck or shipping container based on their density, revealing false walls and secret compartments. Passing through the many access settings, varying heat and contrast, Jones points to a variety of identifiable, obviously visible objects—the yacht's windshield, its propeller, a set of blue crates beside the tractor trailer. "Anything that doesn't fit in is going to stand out," he says. In this case, the boat is clear.

The technology is flawless, but it has its limitations. At \$2 million apiece, CIS units are pricey, so there are just 12 in Canada to be shared between land crossing

In the end, Butcher, who has since been released, wouldn't say where the weapons played in his car. As a result of his inability to name names, he enjoys the good will of the Malvern Centre, including about a dozen mostly Jamaican members who were connected to his father's business who threatened him were warned that they may soon be going to the hospital. And when emerged that Crown prosecutors had had to pin a gang-related charge on him, his wealthy friends looked with laughter. A few started calling him "Da being-gangster man."

The idea of playing bag-man music to a group of outlaws is not something Butcher finds terribly amusing. But prison has given him time to think, to read, to examine his conscience. He has learned his lesson, he says, he knows where danger lies—and a little anyone becomes by doing so. He's not a "bitch" anymore because he's always found—he's determined not to be duped again. "With the death toll from gun shootings rising on Canadian streets, and nothing on the horizon to alter the flow of American guns, can the same be said for the rest of us?"

Photo: gill/PhotoNews, Logos: C&P

'F--- WITH US, YOU DIE'

A drug bust reveals another side of an aspiring B.C. politician, writes KEN MACQUEEN

IT WAS A disappointing winter for Ravinderjit Kaur Puar, a brash and ambitious would-be politician in British Columbia. In January, the 30-year-old job technician at the B.C. Cancer Agency and mother of a young daughter lost her bid for the provincial NDP nomination for Vancouver-Kingsway, an unimpressive-rich riding in the south of the city. While her family has sold concrete



Accused of trying to sell outlaws to an undercover officer, Puar's roots led to the U.S.

trucks in the Indo-Canadian community there, some and Puar—who often uses her married name, Shergill—was hampered by a weak grasp of the issues and her past ties to the federal Liberals. She was part of a disreputable back alley Prime Minister Paul Martin's leadership bid, and her family campaigned for Ujjal Dosanjh, the ex-B.C. premier who is now federal health minister.

Who's next in the provincial legislature ran ahead. Puar seemed on to a new challenge: to run for Vancouver city council in the forthcoming November civic elections. She met twice with influential city councillor Jim Green, who has since announced his campaign for mayor as part of a new left-leaning team. Green was impressed. An articulate, well-connected Indo-Canadian woman would be a valuable addition to city hall, he says. "If he had been what I thought he was, she would have been ideal."

Now it seems Puar's political ambitions—and her reputation—are in tatters. On June 30, she was arrested in Auburn, Wash., south of Seattle, charged with selling thousands of bulk-quantity cocaine pills to an undercover drug agent, and for conspiring to sell tens of thousands more.

The elaborate, month-long sting, conducted by a covert team of special agents of

the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, also led to the arrest, on similar charges, of three others: Sarjit Singh Voh, a Canadian, and Amarjit Singh Voh and Kamjit Singh Ghag. Puar's arrest

HAVE the notoriously murderous Indo-Canadian gangs sunk roots into B.C.'s mainstream political circles?

shocked the Indo-Canadian community, spoiled political prospects and raised eyebrows among drug investigators. The lethal war of Indo-Canadian gangs and dealers—described by Puar as produce from according to the DEA—was considered a man's world. The arrest of a woman, espe-

cially one in the political and social mainstream, changes the equation. "It can touch anyone, at any time, in any neighborhood, regardless of their background," says Grant Winderlich, spokesman for the newly formed B.C. Integrated Gang Task Force. It also raises a troubling question: have B.C. Indo-Canadian gangs—regarded the most successful in Canada—sunk roots into mainstream political circles?

As Puar pondered her political future this spring, the DEA alleges she was making contact with another sort: arranging the sale in Washington state of tens of thousands of ecstasy tablets in south-of-the-border, perhaps to fund her forthcoming campaign. In phone calls and meetings at fast food restaurants and mall parking lots throughout the Seattle area, the DEA claims Puar and her associates laid out their product line and business plan, unaware they were

dealing with informants and undercover agents. Another waspisknag and double-decker tablets in US\$4.50 and \$3 a pop, each imprinted with a logo similar to that on Indefat Lacey cars. There was also Dauphine at up to US\$4.25, and a new "Pierrot" pill the DEA says Puar was bringing to market.

Details of the nearly long martial courtesan—drawn from confidential sources, secret age recordings and mobile surveillance teams—are contained in a seven, 17-page computer file in U.S. District Court in Seattle by DEA Special Agent Joseph Parker, a former Marine Corps officer with a history of drug trafficking, investigations. His statement, including transcripts of a recorded conversation between Puar and an agent wearing a hidden body wire, porting a much less player in a deadly enterprise. Of drug dealers who have been with her for 30 years, Puar says in the transcript: "They don't f— around with me because when they f— around with me, guaranteed, they'll be f—ing six feet under, and they know it." The transcript—allegedly part of negotiations in a period on between Puar and the agent—includes a vocal description of the rough paragoned out by Indo-Canadian gangs: "Took, it's that simple," she's quoted as saying, "that's what the game is like in Vancouver, you f— with us, you die."

Both Puar and Vish were denied bail at their first appearance on July 7 in U.S. District Court. On July 28, Puar pleaded not guilty to all charges, and will have been set for Sept. 19. Whatever the outcome, the DEA transcript captures the raw brutality of gang life. More than 80 Indo-Canadian men have been murdered in the past 10 years, many due to gang and drug violence. There have been several arrests at the U.S. border of Indo-Canadian drug couriers, some claiming they were forced into the role. An Indo-Canadian, Phineas Devendra Raj, was among the three men arrested last month, accused of constructing the elaborate smuggling tunnel under the border from Raj's property at Aldergrove, B.C., to a house in Lynden, Wash. A police investigation 15 months ago resulted in a raid on the B.C. Legislature, and criminal charges against Robert Virk and David Rose—criminal allies and organizers within the Indo-Canadian community for the provincial and federal Liberals. Drug charges against Rose were dropped. A trial on fraud and breach of trust charges against the two is set for November.

B.C. ethnic papers such as the Indo-Canadian Voice and the Asian Star recently report such new murder, beating and arson. "It has to end," says Vice editor Justin Mail, who has formerly demanded more involvement by government and the Indo-Canadian community in stopping the gangs. Other organized crime groups have greater economic clout, he says, but none are more violent. Indo-Canadian gangs are "totally



November police investigate a June shooting with suspected Indo-Canadian gang links

reality didn't want to deal with it." Those who've met Puar struggle to reconcile the DEA's version of events with the woman they know. Given says Puar once acted as mediator and go-between for her in a meeting with Indo-Canadian members. "She was very polite. She called the other gang 'viele,' and it seemed everyone knew her," he says. Urquidín Singh, editor of the Asian Star and one of Puar's opponents for

the NDP nomination, recalls "a very nice lady." He can't remember if she spoke out about gangs and drugs, but it's a hard issue to avoid. "Any Indo-Canadian who has sought some kind of leadership role has spoken about this," he says. "I assume that somehow or other this thing has gone to all parts of our community."

Puar's arrest has caused a rift among 500 in B.C.'s Lower Mainland. Some are praising her father, Kalwant Singh Puar, operator of a small tow-truck fleet, to resist his seat on the executive of Vancouver's Rose Street temple—the centre of religious and social life for many of the city's Sikhs. Const Sirik has met with some temple executives, though not with Puar, seeking better use of police up-brother by temple members. Community leaders, he says, play a huge role in forging public attitudes.

But that tension alone, Puar's arrest may foster a new and higher burden of proof on Indo-Canadians asking office. Unlikely or not, there will be questions to answer: Who is this person asking to lead? And why? ■

THOSE who have met Puar struggle to reconcile her drug arrest and coming trial with the woman they know

now has 10 investigations in place, 10 more will be added by fall. Its first priority will be violence and major crimes involving South Asian, particularly Indo-Canadian crime groups," says police spokesman Kirk, an Indo-Canadian. The veteran officer drew on his own upbringing to explain how gang activity has flourished within a segment of the community. There used to be a culture of denial about crime, and a reluctance to seek help from society at large, he says. "You

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NO PEACE, NO TRUCE

As Israel withdraws from its Gaza settlements, Hamas claims a victory and vows to fight on

MAHMOUD AL-ZAHAR'S BIG, now house in Gaza city is almost finished. The workmen are busy on rickety scaffolding, four stories in the air, anchoring some facing, its polished surface is tinted an unusual shade of grey—an exact match for the flag of Hamas (he is proudly atop his front gate). Al-Zahar is keen for visitors to know what happened to his previous home. In the first-floor reception room, he sits cross-legged on an upholstered chair and passes around snapshots of the devastation wrought by the missiles Israeli F-16s fired in September 2005. One shows a lifeless body being carried from the rubble. A bodyguard, he says, rather than the other family, his 24-year-old son, Khalid. Some images, it seems, are not appropriate for police company.

Al-Zahar, an articulate, 60-year-old reception with a graying comb-over and a slight

infirmitas in his brow—the mark of a Muslim who prays devoutly—is the militant group's senior member in Gaza. According to many observers, he is the organization's leader, though that's not a title he's willing to claim after Israeli Defense Forces assassinated his two predecessors—Shahid Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, a pediatrician—in quick succession in the spring of 2004. What al-Zahar is eager for the world to believe is that Hamas, with its underground tunnels, is the main reason Israel is dismantling 21 settlements and pulling out of the Gaza strip. "We are playing suicide Israel. We are destroying their economy; we have destroyed the dignity of the IDF. Sharon and he would crash the table within 100 days. Now, five years later, he is leaving."

The Palestinian Authority negotiated, Hamas, and the other militant groups, fought. It's clear who succeeded, he says.

The various Palestinian factions take pains to explain that there is no *taboo*—truce—with Israel. There isn't even a ceasefire, *et al* away. The current loss of settlements is *taboo*, *calamitous*. And some times not even that. The Israeli government says July saw a 30-per-cent increase in mortar attacks on the settlements, and there were several deaths on both sides of the divide. Al-Zahar vows that someday, perhaps someday soon, the full-fledged fighting will resume. The Koran prophesies the Jewish state's defeat and the Zionists' despair, he says, whether it's next year or 150 years from now. Meanwhile, he and his organization have more goals in mind.

Over the course of a night in Gaza last month, militants are now trying for more

goals in mind. They want political power—preferably all of it, but a share will suffice for now—in Gaza. They will not disarm, improve the economy, build the pre-conditions for ultimate victory. The slogan will not be the "corner" of American and European power from the body of the Middle East. "We are calling for democracy," says al-Zahar, "because democracy will bring Islam."

THE SQUARE in front of the Palestinian legislature is festooned with flags and banners. The police band is on hand, leading it in a military march with its brass and bagpipes

Ahmed Qurei, the Palestinian prime minister, takes the stage and tries to add some excitement to the proceedings. Today would have been Yasser Arafat's birthday, he reminds the crowd, a couple of thousand loyalists to his ruling Fatah party, based in the for the occasion. There is a cheer and a brief round of chanting. The pallor from Gaza is only the first step, Qurei vows. "The national struggle will continue until we reach Jerusalem and celebrate there, and in the West Bank." A hole more applause and chanting, some obligatory firing of AK 47s into the air. Maybe it's the life-support effects of Gaza's hellish smoggy air, but the party never gets off the ground. It feels like a high school pep rally, forced and desultory.

The Palestinian Authority is mounting an

aggressive PR campaign (funded by the UN and the World Bank), advertising on radio and television, and distributing T-shirts, bumper stickers and baseball caps. "Our land will return to us. Let us protect it," says one slogan. "The people liberated the land. The people will build the land," goes another. Worldwide in the strip have been going flat out to fill the government's order for 60,000 national flags to fly over the reclaimed territories, along with 35,000 Fatah flags, and 20,000 banners depicting Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, the new Palestinian president. But for all the rhetoric and jingoism, real public enthusiasm is in short supply. Residents know that Israeli tanks, helicopters and soldiers have always been able to come and go as they please. Their re-

sistance—crude rockets, small-scale attacks on the settlements, suicide bombs at the border checkpoints—has often been deadly, but far less militarily effective than what is happening in Iraq. In preparation for departure, the IDF is busy constructing two additional security forces to hem in the territory. Many Palestinians worry they are inheriting a prison instead of a sovereign land.

"There is a sense of anxiety that anything could happen—by mistake, or design," says Zaid Abu Amer, a member of the Legislative Council, who has been active in brokering a deal between the PA and the militant factions. There needs to be a formal understanding on power sharing, third claims for the next rounds of municipal and national elections, and a consensus on what it is to be



date with the reclaimed lands. But construction "silos" don't just depend on peering over internal divisions. There also must be substantive progress from the Israeli and the international community on the issues surrounding the West Bank, Jerusalem and the rights of displaced Palestinians. "If things filter, people will remember there is another method," he says.

Ariel Sharon and George W. Bush's will progress to go further, faster—as the Palestinian wish—is open to debate. The Israeli prime minister must face the election by the fall of 2006, and his Gaza disengagement plan has already enraged his pro-settlement Likud party base. Bush's intentions are easily fanned elsewhere, and the Republicans are already looking ahead to the next U.S. election cycle. It all contributes to a deep-seated sense of pessimism in Gaza. It's nothing like 1993, when the Oslo peace accord was made, and people flooded the streets to celebrate, handing flowers to IDF soldiers. Eyal El Sarraf, a psychiatrist who runs an NGO focusing on the mental health of Palestinian civilians who have been caught up in the conflict, says keeping a moderate face on Gaza's politics will be difficult. "Mostly people are skeptical," he says. "This will provide ammunition for those who would rather fight."

El Sarraf, who was a member of the Camp David negotiating team, says despite Barak's growing popularity, his supporters, like the vast majority of Gazans, are tired of the fighting and would be willing to settle for a "dignified peace." But the PA has done little to show the population it's capable of delivering the kind of reason, peace and social changes that Israel has. "We don't trust the PLO or the PNA, or Hamas, or the American," he says. "It's a complete failure of leadership."

THE PULLOUT is hardly a proven fix for the strip's massive problems. Saweenge from the settlements and refugee camps—the only mass mingling of Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza—spills into the Mediterranean coast to white sand beaches that are somehow still popular. In the streets, cars and donkeys compete with luxury Mercedes. The empty blue plane bag could well become a national symbol, as the entire landscape is littered with it. Almost 1.5 million people, half of them under the age of 15, are crisscrossing Israel's 365 sq km (75 comparisons, Prince Edward Island has just 137,000 res-



Reclaiming Gaza (clockwise from top left): one of the region's bustling flag factories; dismantling an Israeli greenhouse near a settlement in the southern Gaza strip; girls at a music workshop organized by Islamic (left) Senior Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zuhair

idents in 2,640 sq km.) It is one of the poorest places on Earth with an annual per-capita GDP of US\$860 (Israel's is US\$28,200, Canada's US\$31,500). Unemployment hovers around 40 per cent.

The case of what to do with the land from the 23 settlements and the military buffer zones around them—often two or three times as large as the communities themselves—is already a divisive one. The IDF is getting down the 7,000 houses after the settlers are evacuated, something that will help the PA avoid the nightmare scenario of quarters or military groups moving in. But there is little more than the open spaces will be put

to good use. In the past it's been divided by Fatah and the PA, who have derived the greatest benefits from foreign aid and welfare and major construction projects.

The militant groups have very particular ideas about how new housing should be allocated. "The first chance should go to the families of the martyrs and detainees, and those who were harmed by occupation forces," says Nafiz Azzam, a senior leader of Islamic Jihad. His group will be watching to ensure that Abbas live up to his promises of transparency and reform. Jihad doesn't want to be an official part of the government, but it expects seats and significant

input on the internal ministries that will decide policy. (The groups already busy at grassroots politicking, already paying for a mass wedding of 322 couples in Gaza.) Azzam says he has no problem with the PA, but the official face and voice of Palestinian. But like the other militant groups, Jihad isn't planning to dissent anytime soon. "The weapons of resistance will remain in long as the Israeli danger is in place," he says.

Although there's no shortage of weapons in Gaza, the PA complains it doesn't have enough guns or bullets to outfit its troops, much less crack down on militant activity, as the world demands. Israel, fearing that there are no degrees of separation between the security and militant forces, refuses to open the border with Egypt to new arms shipments. The mutual mistrust has made

negotiations on a whole range of border issues difficult, and it appears that Israel will be forced before the settlements are fully dismantled sometime this fall. Dima Bara, a Palestinian-Canadian from Toronto who acts as a senior legal and media advisor to the PA, says she has been deeply frustrated by the process. She cites the example of the industrial park at the border crossing. The 300-business facility is being handed over, but no provisions have been made to physically get in goods into Israel. The IDF wants every item to be put on a pallet and forbidden over a high barrier wall. If something is too big or heavy, a just won't get to market.

Bara argues that it's ridiculous Palestinians are being told they must own control of the building blocks of their own economy—the airport, sea port and border crossings—

through good behavior. "It's become really disgusting to me that the international community talks about this as a model. As if the Palestinians have to beg for their freedom or prove that they are worthy."

THE NEXUS of humiliation in Gaza is a farmer's field belonging to Abdul Kader Abu Haly, the 49-year-old patriarch of the Abu Haly clan. The main road—the only road—linking the north and south of the 50-km-long strip runs through it. So does the east-west highway into Gush Katif, the largest Israeli settlement block. At the beginning of the summer holiday, what used to be a simple crossroad morphed into a heavily fortified checkpoint that bears the farmer's family name, bristling with tanks, pillboxes and machine-gun towers. When there is trouble—like the July killing of a Jerusalem couple on the highway as they drove back from seeing relatives in Gush Katif—it shut for days. Even when things are quiet, it can take hours to get through.

Disagreement should bring an end to the endless wars. For most Gazans, that will be the single biggest change in their lives, at least initially. At his farm house, Abu Haly is impatiently waiting for his day to come. He has been farming the fields for 40 years, and in conflict with his Israeli neighbors for almost as long. The IDF has bulldozed his palms, almond trees and orange and guava groves to create buffer zones in the conflict-ridden area. Abu Haly says he and his clan have always prevented the militants from using their land to launch attacks. But now of his sons, both Jewish Israelis, are in Israeli jails, one arrested in 20 years. In 2000, a nephew was shot and killed near the checkpoint. Two teenage members of the clan were arrested in late July and are being held for interrogation. One of Abu Haly's many sons talks about how his young daughters can now distinguish between the sounds of gunfire from an AK-47 and an Israeli M-16. Despite a recent stroke, the patriarch is determined to return to the fields since the Israeli leave. "Gearing up of the occupation is worse now than it was 10 years ago," he says. "They killed young children, they bulldozed our land." On his part, at least, there will be no forgiveness. Israel's bet that a few extra kilometers of land will improve things seems like a long shot. □

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LIVIN' LARGE SELLIN' SUDS

The siblings behind a runaway Calgary booze empire know that in the brewski biz, image is everything

RAVINDER MINHAS drains down his mammoth Hurricane H1 and buries toward the front door of one of Calgary's finest car dealerships. "Get your chequebook out," he yells, disappearing inside. It's older than, Marj, trails a few steps behind. "Let me just grab a pen," she says, rolling her eyes.

About a dozen cars—most are cherry red and midnight black Ferraris—fill the showroom floor. Ravinder leans over the rope dividing men and machines and stops just short of touching the vehicles, fearful he may smudge their perfectly polished finishes. He rarely

jumps out of his skin at the sight of a 2004 Ferrari 360 Spider. Price tag: \$105,000. "I should really just buy him a T-shirt," whispers Marj, 25, well out of earshot.

After about 20 minutes of gawking at the unspeakable beauty of chrome and steel under the hood, Ravinder heads for home, somewhat reluctantly. It's just a Sunday afternoon today. "I can drive one last summer," says Ravinder, 23. "But it's just too much. Too showy." This from a guy who's toting a 10,000-lb. tank through Calgary's downtown streets.

Meet Canada's youngest beer barons—the brother-sister team behind an alcohol empire that raked in \$50 million in total revenue last year. In Alberta alone, they sold nearly four million 12-packs of their true-boy priced beer and sales are up this year by more than 50 percent. Not bad for a couple of petroleum engineering grads who just happen to find booze way more fun than oil. Even better considering they still live at home with mom and dad. But while it's been a joy ride so far, the market for cheap reds is filling up with competition. And the long, expensive battle they've waged to break into Ontario suggests the toughest challenges are still ahead.

A BABY PHOTO hanging in the family's basement captures Ravinder with his tiny two-year-old hands wrapped around a stubby bottle of Molson Canadian. While still in diapers, he was often caught stealing a sip from his dad's beer (in fact, Mom Minhas stopped drinking for a couple of years to keep his young son away from the bottle). That's just one of the many ways Ravinder and his sister scored first for the booze business. Raised by parents who own three liquor stores, Marj and Ravinder were

born into the industry when they started Mountain Crest Liquors Inc. in 1999. "We went to a bank for a loan and they told us there was no way they'd give us any money unless our parents co-signed," recalls Ravinder. "Our ages were way too big for that, so we made it work with the \$10,000 we had saved." They inked a deal with a distillery in Kentucky to bottle mugs and trademark their competitors' prices. Thirsty for more, they set their sights on Canada's beer industry. They found a brewmaster in Chicago, and created a beer with Canadian ingredients so cheaply, they've been able to sell it for about \$3 a can. That's how Mountain Crest Brewing Co. was born.

While Ravinder is the hard-core negotiator (i.e., big talker) and "official beer



Marj and Ravinder scored \$50 million in revenue last year, and 2005 sales are way up

taster." Marj, who rarely drinks, is the voice of reason. She playfully scolds her brother whenever he talks about frivolously spending money. In fact, spend any time with the siblings and it's easy to mistake them for a married couple. Or maybe a couple of college buddies still soaking in the benefits of adult business success.

"I PIMPED MY RIDE," laughs Ravinder, pointing out the toys he added to truck out his Mountain Crest Liquors, including a Sony PlayStation, a TV screen and a Garmin stereo. "It came with leather seats," he scoffs. Now Mountain Crest's Marj and the company slogan, *Don't Goof Around*, are stitched onto the leather headrests. The couple, embossed with the Mountain Crest Classic Lager logo, attracts plenty of attention, which is how Ravinder likes it. When he's unable to immediately find a spot on a strip mall parking lot during lunch hour, he drives the curb, parking his beer on wheels on the grass in front of a restaurant. He flashes a mischievous grin. Marj just shakes her head.

Ravinder's seat picker looks about two inches long for his torso, two-inch frame, leaving the impression that he really has dad's closet. Turns out, it has more to do with Ravinder's recent workout regimen. "I've lost 45 pounds in the past 18 months and I'm not done yet," he says. "I needed to get in better shape, and the excuse of not having enough time because of work was bullshit. So I cut out TV, giving myself a couple of hours a day to hit the gym. It's turned into an addiction."

So on the 80-hour work weeks, Ravinder runs his business-focused mainly on Alberta and the U.S.—from his parents' main-floor den. Marj operates the company responsible for the newer markets, Ontario

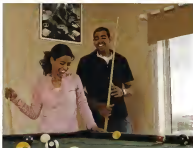
and Marlene, from the basement. It seems that set-up makes everyone happy—the Mirhaus like having the kids close by until they get married, as is common in Indo-Canadian families. And the kids get to focus on business without worrying about mundane stuff like cooking and doing laundry. It's not like they don't show their appreciation, however—they just buy Marlene a new Lexus RX330 for her 50th birthday.

Working from home is just one way the Mirhaus have tried to keep the company as unpretentious as possible. None of their 30 employees has an MBA. In fact, one of the general managers doesn't even have a high-school diploma. The thought of coming in by taking the company public isn't even worth entertaining. "I don't want to answer to anyone," says Ravinder. "I don't want to be accountable to shareholders. I just want to be accountable to myself."

While visiting a downtown Calgary liquor store, Marj and Ravinder shake hands with the shopkeeper before straightening out their products on the shelves and making sure that all of their labels are clearly visible. Later, during dinner at a Mexican restaurant, Marj points out that our menu's marketing is made with their Compadre and Gold Tepalcates and Museo Pile Triple Sec. (They have 90 different brands of liquor in their portfolio, and have also dabbled in the wine biz, exporting a short list from Germany and France.)

Beer, of course, is the quid pro quo. And Ontario is the promised land, where 36 per cent of beer in Canada is consumed. Marj is desperate for a piece of that action and to get her Calabrese Creds in shape. Problem is, the Alcohol Gaming Commission of Ontario isn't yet satisfied with her application. "The man outstanding us is that we don't know the name of our manufacturer," says Ab Campbell, spokesperson for the AGCO. "Everything else, generally speaking, has been dealt with. It's in their hands."

But type in the only problem they've faced. In March the Ontario Provincial Police investigated Marj for alleged money laundering. "The O.P.P. sent me a four-page letter asking for information about my bank accounts, everyone I deal with, and all my incomes," says Marj. "They told me they were looking at organized crime. It was ridiculous. After half an hour I was in a meeting with a detective, she threw it out."



The Mirhaus left are as no hurry to leave out of town and don't place anytime soon

The Ontario campaign has been a costly effort—\$350,000 in legal, administrative and advertising expenses so far—and a stark lesson in how hard it can be to graduate from quality importer to legitimate competitor. "I consider that the expense of doing business in Ontario," she says matter-of-factly. "I'll get that money back—and a lot more—on the long run. I will put everything on the line for 10 per cent of

THEY'RE handing out half-a-million bags of potato chips with their slogan, *Damn Good Beer!*, splashed on the front

Ontario. I don't care what it costs." To get across the magic number to every market—except Alberta, where Ravinder is confident he can secure a whopping 15-per-cent share. And while Ontario has proven problematic, business is expanding. This fall Marj plans to have her beer on shelves in Saskatchewan. And the hopes are still on in B.C. and Quebec by as early as next year.

To keep up with the big boys and their deep pockets, the Mirhaus have had to find unique ways of capturing consumers'

attention. Last year they gave away 17.7 Cruisers with one-year leases. And by the end of this summer, they'll have shelled out half-a-million bags of potato chips—with *Damn Good Beer!* splashed on the front of the packages. "Manufacturing is the easy part," says Marj. "It's the art of marketing." Their priority center, with not a doubt, is the budget-conscious beer drinker. And this every other "Volvo" beer, the Mirhaus' various brands are commonly traded on Internet beer sites. On nationwide, a Calgary-based beer drinker offers up that assessment: "Already drunk? Want to get drunker for the lowest price possible? Clear Creek Ice is the beer for you! No head, little carbonation, watery taste with a distinct rubbing alcohol and slight malt aftertaste. Perfect for use in your favorite beer bong."

That may not be the kind of raging endorsement they were looking for, but the Mirhaus have tough enough skin to shake off the critics. Convinced their youthful enthusiasm, it just so easy. "Earlier today we got all excited when we drove by a homeless guy on the street who was collecting cans and saw that he had two of our Clear Creek Ice cans in his bag," laughs Marj. "It was the same feeling we get when we see a crushed can on the ground outside of a football game," says Ravinder without a trace of irony. "It's one of those you-know-you've made it when someone's 'Hey—whatever it takes to pay for the Pepsi!'"



FEAR OF A NEW RED MENACE

Our paranoia about China is getting ridiculous. It's time to get over it.

IT MUST BE mighty confusing to be in the government of China these days. You spend the better part of a decade trying to drag yourself out of the dark ages of Maoist Communism, gradually adopt the ways and values of Western capitalists, and then even when you do manage to show your Western countries you're open, you still can't get a break.

Last month, China's government finally bowed to Western demands, allowing its currency, the renminbi, to rise for the first time in more than a decade. It was a tiny move, just two per cent, but tonight it did up being the most significant baby step in modern economic

history—not because of what it will accomplish, but because of what it represents.

For years China has held its currency down to help its manufacturers sell to the West. The result has been a flood of inexpensive Chinese imports, and an equally steady loss of manufacturing jobs in North America. The U.S. in particular has seen its trade deficit with China explode, driving down the U.S. dollar and threatening to demolish the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency. So when the People's Bank of China responded to the pleas of U.S. officials in late July, it came as a major relief.

This tiny policy shift won't solve America's debt fiscal and economic problems, and it won't halt the long-term slide of Western manufacturing industries. But as symbolic

Chinese oil firm CNODC last fall, Unocal Corp., demonstrated as a threat to national security. Opponents warned that China could use Unocal's technology for military purposes (not likely), and that the oil then goes over not only bad, the Chinese would divert production to feed their own factories and cars (very less likely).

Rampant misdeeds notwithstanding, but we Canadians are not alone. Become overtures by Chinese companies to buy more superior Noranda Inc. and Calgary-based Husky Energy were met with similar fear mongering. Under constant harping about China's "voracious appetite" for natural resources, the Noranda offer fell apart, and the Husky managers have gone cold.

All this is reminiscent of the mid-1990s,

ARE WE REALLY AFRAID the Communists are going to topple Western democracies by seizing control of the dishwasher business?

when Japan was the world's emerging economic juggernaut. At the time, the backlash against foreign investment was intense as nationalists called for tariffs to contain Japan's rising power. Those fears look silly in retrospect, but that's our history we only like open trade when we're not enjoying it.

So it is with China. Its critics get free risks because international trade has few natural disruptions in the world of politics. On the left, the anti-globalization crowd screams for more protectionism to save unionized manufacturing jobs, while railing about China's repressive human rights record. Those

complainers are naive and short-sighted, but at least they have a coherent logic to them. The anti-China screams from right wingers aren't so coherent. Take, for example, congressman Joe Barton, the Texas Republican who recently attacked the proposed Unocal takeover, saying "Hell/China" is run by "contemporary Communists who somehow learned to love profit but not freedom."

Mr. Barton simply hasn't been paying attention. American firms have 23 times as much invested in China as vice versa. Kodak and Adobe are already—*and doing huge business with* Chinese customers who are happy to embrace them. If anybody's missing the capitalist ideal of free-flowing markets and international competition, it's us.

There are some who will say that China got its hands on a major North American oil producer like Husky or Unocal is still a bad idea in an era of energy shortages. But consider the fact that a similar scenario greeted the recent attempt by a Chinese conglomerate to acquire Maytag. What's the objection there? Are the party Communists going to topple Western democracies by seizing control of the dishwasher business?

Surprised all the alarmists are and we're left with a pretty simple choice. If we want China to be a more open society, then depending our trade relations on a prerequisite. That means opening our shores to Chinese investment, just as theirs are gradually opening to us. The potential benefits—for security, commerce, environment and peace—are enormous. And the costs of isolation are just as staggering.

Asking us to see Chinese as a threat, it will be one. As long as we consider it a problem to be solved rather than an opportunity to be grasped, the potential of a better world is gone. So let's stop worrying about China's economic growth and let's let it in.

Read Steve Mach's writing, "All Business," at www.stevemach.com/allbusiness

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M.B.

A BANK'S ENRON BOMB

The US\$2.4-billion lawsuit settlement buys a clean slate for CIBC's new CEO, but at grievous cost

IT'S A NUMBER Ray Street wasn't even 50 yet. On the first business day following John Huxlin's exit as CEO of Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the bank settled a lawsuit with Enron shareholders, who had accused CIBC's officers involved in the shady business deal led to the U.S. energy firm's stunning collapse in 2004. To make the suit go away, CIBC agreed to another US\$250 million settlement for its different Enron-related suit, this one from the company itself.

To put the US\$2.4 billion in perspective, it's not only more money than the bank made last year, it's the largest single bid in Canadian banking history, ever. While the bank did not admit wrongdoing, the settlement's dollar size raised up buyers up and down Bay Street. "You don't pay US\$2.4 billion if you don't think there was potential you were going to be found to be wrong," says Richard Pownall, a University of Toronto professor specializing in business ethics.

The size of the shopper payout again surprised the bank, too, which earlier had just made a woefully inadequate \$100 million to cover the lawsuit's cost. In an early morning conference call with analysts on his second day as CEO, Gerry McCaughey explained the settlement was intended to "reduce the uncertainty of potential litigation." "The lawyers realized too, he added, that the longer they let this drag on, the more expensive it would become. The goal was to make the case of a bad

Huxlin (left) was essentially in his own way by the time McCaughey broke the bad news

situation. "We believe we are optimizing our situation by settling," McCaughey said. "That was the price we had to pay to do so."

What a price it is. Consider the fact that CIBC's profits last year were near \$2 billion. Use that as a benchmark, and "for the next year, CIBC is in effect working for the Enron shareholders," Pownall points out.

CIBC's revenues immediately felt pain as the bank's share price dropped \$6.09 in a day to \$74.55, about less than the \$7.25 an analyst pegged as the sector's cost per share. Other analysts downgraded the stock. But that's just the beginning of the repercussions. While the bank might not slash dividends—a key component of many investors' portfolios—it will be hard-pressed to meet them. The deal leaves CIBC with a seriously weakened balance sheet. To maintain earnings growth of 10 per cent, a target McCaughey called "impossible," it will have to cut costs, which could well mean jobs. And if the merger dance returns soon to the banking sector, CIBC won't be ready



for a payoff. It'll just be an easy target. And then there are the investors. Already shareholders are clamoring for Huxlin, who led the bank through its deal-making with Enron, in part with some \$51 million-plus cost package. Some want to know when the bank realized how much the settlement might cost. Did it wait for Huxlin to leave before closing the deal? Others wonder if Huxlin left when he did because he saw the damage coming. If that bit had come earlier, say in the 2004 fiscal year, and costed a less, Huxlin's retirement package would have taken a hit, say compensation expert Luis Naves of Vancouver, Rick Services Ltd.

Many investors are asking what the board was doing when the bank got into this mess. At the time, CIBC was trying to position itself as a player in the big leagues of the U.S., where the stakes are high and the competition powerful. Under Huxlin's leadership and that of his now-departed protégé, David Kuzne, getting cozy with major companies like Enron was part of the strategy. The risk was enormous, as was the potential reward. For a while, CIBC's share price, which doubled under Huxlin's tenure, reflected that reward. But as it turned out, many believe ambition got in the way of good judgment. Now what's left, days after Huxlin's departure, is the major second cost of the role, a diminished company with a damaged reputation, a massive payout, and the potential of more shareholder lawsuits.

THE BANK decided it was better to settle than fight. This was the price we had to pay," as the new CEO put it.

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WILLIAM TAKES A BRIDE?

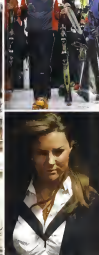
Word is the prince is planning to marry his university housemate

ATTRACTIVE, cheerful, and with the bloom of good health about her, 23-year-old Kate Middleton is described as down-to-earth and sensible. Could this sweetener also be the love of Prince William's life? The dating saga of the royal family, also 23, is said to be planning to buy a house with her in London this autumn, with eye to announcing their engagement. A royal wedding could be in the offing as early as next spring.

Middleton has already lived under the same roof as William, as his housemate at St. Andrews University in Scotland, where he recently graduated with a master's degree in geography, and she with a degree in art history. Although they've managed to conduct their romance out of the public eye, the sporting young woman from the shires has met with universal approval, and the royals reportedly have already accepted her as one of the family. It is a measure of her affable nature that she agreed to go on a romantic retreat with William this month at the 18,000-hectare ranch in Kenya of William's co-godfather, James Craig. The two women publicly met for the first time in June, at the wedding of a mutual friend.

Middleton first came to the public's attention in 2002, when she was one of three friends sharing a house with the prince during his second year of university. Her father had denied early reports of a romance, describing her as more than good for him at the time, William was still involved with Craig, and Middleton had another boyfriend.

But their friendship blossomed into something stronger the following year, after Middleton guided him through a difficult patch of his academic studies. Discouraged



THE QUEEN is reported to have formed an affectionate bond with her grandson's girlfriend at first sight



by his poor progress at the history of art program, William considered dropping out, but she persuaded him to stay on and switch to geography. They soon became inseparable—Kate was often seen drinking with the prince at the Maella pub, a popular student hangout, or cheering from the sidelines as he competed in rugby tournaments.

William has never formally commented on his relationship with Middleton, but allowed it to be known that she'll become his intimate companion. They went on a ski holiday in Gstaad, Switzerland, in April 2004, and again vacationed together on Rodriguez island in Mauritius, last August. But the first clear signal they had become a serious couple—and enjoyed his father's blessing—was when Prince Charles lent the two his falconry holiday in February for week-

long breaks from their university studies. Reports that the couple have reached the stage of contemplating matrimony surfaced in *The Spectator*, a conservative weekly magazine whose influence far outweighs its circulation, especially on matters concerning the monarchy. Its social reporter, Matthew Bell, relied on unnamed palace insiders and friends of the pair for the story, in which he wrote: "Not only has she gained the Queen's approval, but the Duke of Edinburgh is said to be especially fond of her, and Charles and Camilla already see her as part of the family."

William is Britain's most popular royal son for the Queen, with whom he shares the distinction of never having made a wrong step in public. He is close to his grandmother and seeks her advice on matters of

public duty and personal affairs, as her approval of Middleton would mean much to him. He has had other girlfriends but dropped them on the advice of the Queen or palace insiders, and is often self-mocking about his looks and position giving him ready access to beautiful women. His favorite pick-up line is "Hi, I'm the fiancé—would you pull [your a line]?"—delivered with deadpan irony.

His marriage to Middleton would not only be the most celebrated royal event since the wedding of Charles and Diana 24 years ago, but it would also lend weight

to the argument that the businessness of the monarchy may best be served if he were to reign as his father's place.

MIDDLETON'S FATHER, Michael, is a Berkshire businessman, and her mother, Carol, a former flight attendant. Together they run a mail-order business called Party Picnic that provides hats, dresses and toys for kids' birthday parties. The enterprise affords them a comfortable but not luxurious lifestyle. They live in a five-bedroom detached house in the picturesque village of Bucklebury.

While William was at Eton College, Middleton attended the \$70,000-a-year, coal Marlborough College, where she became prefect and was a popular all-rounder with good, but not excellent, grades. She played field hockey, was a top-ranked tennis play-

er, and beat all the boys in her year at the high jump. As an old Marlborough, she will have absorbed the school's family Church of England ethos (it was founded in 1843 to educate the children of clergy) and second of its spectacular Victorian Gothic chapel. According to *The Spectator*, her most discernible act is to have once moored from a dormitory window.

The *Spectator* even went so far as to speculate she has retained her virginity, an asinine requirement still expected of those who aspire to provide heirs to the throne. "William is Kate's first serious boyfriend," it said, "and if her reputation is as squeaky clean as it seems, this suggests she may still have her virginity intact and thus satisfy the age-old requisite for future queen consorts."

"The truth is that Kate was merely an ordinary upper-middle-class girl who happens to have attracted the eye of the second in line to the throne," the magazine said, nonetheless implying that the meeting may not have been entirely by chance. The article suggests that Carol Middleton, who at 53 is described as a "close young woman," persuaded her daughter to drop her first choice of university and opt for St. Andrews when it was learned William would be going there. Also, she was not alone—the prince's choice of the new Scottish university prompted a deluge of applications, most of them from young women.

The couple are due to return from Kenya at the end of the month. This autumn, William will begin work in the City, the financial district of London. He is slated to volunteer for mountain rescue work and study land management on a voluntary course before possibly crisscrossing at the Sandhurst military academy. He has passed the first qualifying exam as an officer cadet, he is said to be privately considering instead a course devoted to charity work. Like his mother, Diana, Queen Elizabeth II's first net Middleton at the grand evening ceremony at St. Andrews, where the former an affectionate bond with her at first sight. In retrospect, it is ironic that the Queen, Prince Philip, Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall were all looking on as the Vice-Chancellor of St. Andrews gave his welcome address to students: "We will have made life long friends—you may have met your husband or wife," he told them.

"Our role as the top matchmaking authority in Britain figures so much that it is good about St. Andrews. So we rely on you to go forth from St. Andrews and multiply." ■

APRIL ISN'T THE CRUELLEST MONTH

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 may be right—major life events and strong emotions do seem linked to the calendar

NOT TOO MANY YEARS AGO, a friend was catalogued in his funeral by a minister who quoted Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. *Be everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, a time to die.* His three sons—all bigger than he—were impressed. After the service, one of them said, "Cool that the minister used the Bible. My dad woulda liked that." No one bothered to point out that the Bible's Jewish text used Ecclesiastes—most often translated by Peter Berger—in its 147th "Verse Verse." But the meaning of the words, wherever their source, ring through, as it always does: There is a

time for everything—bad stuff will be balanced by happy stuff, tears by laughter—and somehow that knowledge makes the vagaries of fortune easier to wrangle. "Many things in life," observes University of Alberta sociology professor Herb Northcott, "are causally random and unacceptable."

But there's also evidence that many things aren't. When you do a little seasonal stock-taking—using both the Good Book and

LATE FALL must be conducive to getting it on, because July is the top month for the number of Canadian births

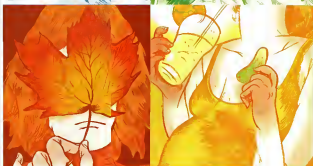
the Good-Hit Song as a template—seasonal moods emerge. The ups and downs of the nation are, more than we think, determined by the calendar. As the months roll by, I see our moods, our behaviours and even the time when we are most likely to be born and to die. To quote Joan Mitchell, "We're captive on the calendar of time."

A time to be loved. • Birth is probably the happiest, most hopeful human event—a flash-ann that brings undeniable joy to parents, grandparents, aunts and cousins. Canadian couples in the baby-making business love to carry up as the late fall turns to early winter. All that heat and humidity are gone, the last hours of summer are skimming across the yard, the first fire of the season is burn-

ing in the hearth. It must be conducive to getting it on for many people, because most Canadian babies are born in July, nine months later, than in any other month—some 20,000 in each of a total of nearly 330,000 in 2002. Statistics Canada figures also indicate that the second-most popular birth month is September (December was again at nearly 20,000; February had the lowest number—24,790—proving what? Maybe in May couples are typically too busy planting seeds in the garden to consider little things like procreation.

A time to lose. • Winter is the season of mourning. In 2002, again courtesy of

StatCan, nearly 224,000 Canadians died, with the months of January, March and December (roughly 20,000 per month) leading the mortality parade. September was the lowest month for deaths in Canada—just 17,510. Why? Well, fall isn't so likely, and, don't laugh, In 2001-2002, according to the National Trauma Registry at the Canadian Institute for Health Information in Ottawa, a whopping 184,000 Canadians were hospitalized because of falls, the leading cause of injury hospitalizations in the country. (The leading cause of death in 1997, cancer,



with heart attacks and strokes running second and third.) Traffic accidents—accidents, for some 28,000 injury hospitalizations—tend to happen most in December. But, according to the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, most alcohol-related smash-ups occur, not around the winter holiday season, but during the summer months of June,

July and August when V-A-C-A-T-A-G-N culture prevails and replace it with beer.

Seasonal peaks in the spring. Says Dr. Robert Levitan, a psychiatrist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. That's because after a long, dark winter of the soul, those who suffer from severe depression begin to feel better in the spring.

time, finding that extra little bit of energy they need to do themselves in. The arrival of spring does other bad things to those who are dependent. "In the winter," says Levitan, "we are all supposed to be miserable. In the spring, depressed people are everywhere else outside of happy stuff." Although it can be dangerously severe in

about three per cent of the population, seasonal affective disorder hits nearly half of Canadians with what Levitan calls "the winter blues" from the time our clocks fall back in October till they spring forward in April. This epidemic of grumpiness will only worsen if we align ourselves with the proposed time changes in the U.S., he warns. "This morning light is good news."

Winter, nonetheless, has its own special time. We are most likely to be killed during the dog days of August when temperatures and tempers rise. From 1991 to 2001, according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, more than 7,300 Canadians were murdered. August led with more than 700 murders, while February had the lowest number with nearly 550.

A time to build up. Not surprisingly, says Gregory Klump, chief economist for the 76,000-member Canadian Real Estate Association in Ottawa, house buying is seasonally driven in Canada. Of a total of 490,000 residential units sold in 2004, more than 49,000 were snapped up in March and April, and over 60,000 in May. During January came in at around 24,000, evenly red with December. Like our spirits, "new listings always pick up in the spring," Klump says. "And they fall off as we head into the winter months." It's not a lot of fun standing around looking at properties in the snow. "Then," as Levitan says, "impulsive trends in income in the spring."

They don't all flow for nothing. And that's why buying a shiny new car also peaks in springtime. "Every year we have a vehicle for the winter," says Dennis DesRosiers of Richardson Hill, Ont., one of Canada's leading automotive analysts. Of the 1.5 million new cars sold during each of the past three or four years, DesRosiers says May always sees a jump of 20,000-30,000 more units than any other month (April is the next biggest). "Winners are hard on vehicles," DesRosiers explains. "People want to wait until the weather has broken." But what about new cars in Christmas season? Say that Porsche Carrera GT with a pretty red belt? "Five thousand to 10,000," says DesRosiers again brutally. "In fact, most new cars are purchased when people have a change in their status of life—like divorce. The No. 1 buyer of sports cars and convertibles is middle-aged women."

A time to break down. • Ah, here it is, divorce. Good luck figuring this one out. As



Clickbait from top left: Sharapova at the 2005 Gator Academic Serena Williams at a 2004 L.A. live premiere; Sharapova at a 2005 New York live premiere and on the cover of *Maxim*; Maria Sharapova strutting down a Miami celebrity Sharapova during the 2005 Rogers Cup

SCORING A GLAM SLAM

The real secret to fame and fortune in women's tennis? Generating serious heat off the court.

IN AN ESSAY WRITTEN for *Vogue* in 1988—a time when Argentinean tennis goddess Gabriela Sabatini's face adorned enough magazine covers and perfume ads to destroy a small forest—British author Marina Aron noted that tennis is “above all an expression of personal power and, in the women's game, in closely bound up with how a player looks, and how she feels she looks.” Nearly two decades later, this notion rings truer than ever. “Tennis has become the first women's sport to produce a pack of truly mainstream celebrities, heralded as much for their style and sex appeal as for their athletic talent.” Right now, the most powerful brands in the Women's Tennis Association are a hard-core ragwear athlete—Serena, Anna,

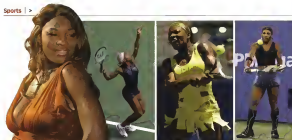
Venus, Maria—who not only look good and know it, but are career savvy enough to flaunt it both on and off the court.

While other professional women's sports are struggling to cultivate financial support and a reasonable fan base, women's marquee players are parlaying their ever-growing popularity into crossover careers in acting, modeling and fashion. Anna Kournikova, who never won a major singles tournament and doesn't even play anymore, has graced recent covers of *Maxim*, *Jose* and the *Sports Illustrated* overseas issue, posing coyly in her usual state of semi-nudity. The Williams sisters are starring in their own reality TV show (*Venus & Serena: For Real*, on ABC Family), designing their own fashion lines and going about town in leopold Dogg songs (from last month's *Rage*, featuring Justin Timberlake: “You'll see Venus and Serena for the Wimbledon Award”). Last year, according to *Sports Illustrated*, of the world's 10 top-earning female athletes, seven were players on the WTA. Topping that list, with combined 2004 earnings totaling more than US\$23 million, is 18-year-old Maria Sharapova, who, along with the Williams sisters, Justine Hinn-Hardner and defending champion Andrei Medvedev, will descend on Toronto this week to compete for the 2005 Rogers Cup.

Everything about Sharapova is golden. Her long, blond party tail. Her much-wanted, milking legs. Even her tennis shoes, embellished with 24-carat gold droplets, custom-created by her design team at Nike. On court, the Russian boss phenoms—who stole the tennis world by storm last year when the upset Serena Williams won the Wimbledon title—in a fierce competitor, delivering serves at speeds of 125 mph with her new infamous pinkish stretch (available online as a downloadable ring tone). Off court, she can increasingly be spotted grazing billboards and red carpets, her six-foot frame draped in jewels and high fashion. Just recently, she overtook Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé and Jessica Simpson to become the No. 1 most-downloaded celebrity.

“It's flattering in a way,” she says, giggling about all of the attention. “We've caught her by phone in a rare in-between moment. She's in Florida, being chauffeured from practice to a publicity event.” “When you think about some person having my picture on their computer, it's just so bizarre. I mean, I think it's absolutely crazy. But on the other side, it's flattering.”

Despite her rigorous training schedule, she's been quick to embrace the entrepreneurial and extracurricular aspects that are now intrinsic to the sport. Sharapova, who appeared in June on the cover of the *Rudeo* “Celebrity Top 100” issue, has described



Certainly it was Serena who first marked the presence of fashion in tennis!

herself as "part athlete, part businesswoman." In late 2003, she signed with IMG Models—agent to the likes of Kate Moss and Gisele Bündchen—and is now featured in campaigns for Nike, Canon, Motorola, Tag Heuer, Pepsi and others. In September, she will join Jet Set Sports and Céline Dion, at department store's frequent partners with her own eponymous perfume, created by Parfums Fragrances Inc., under a reported \$10-million contract. "I'm so excited about it," she gushes. The campaign, shot recently by renowned fashion photographer Patrick Demarchelier, "turned out amazing."

Of course, Sharapova owes much of her mainstream success to the Williams sisters and the unprecedented buzz they've generated for the game. Serena, 23, and Venus, 25—second and third respectively on the list of top female earners—brought style, attitude and a much broader fan base to women's tennis, and they've never been so good leveraging their on-court popularity to pursue their commercial interests. This past March, they published a book called *House of 'Serena'* (Simon & Schuster, \$19.95). And for L'Oréal, L'Oréal and Winmax. Currently, they're vying for a role in the third X-Men film, to be directed by Brett Ratner, Serena's former beau.

Not everyone is thrilled with the idea of tennis players as pop stars. Veteran player Martina Navratilova recently wrote a column for Britain's *Guardian* newspaper attacking Sharapova for not developing close enough ties between sports and entertainment. She charges that too many endorsements and

photo shoots cut into a player's practice time and affect her game. "I'm not a player," she wrote. "I'm a star. I should share the potential in myself."

Still, this year, attendance at the Rogers Cup women's tournament (sponsored by Rogers Communications Inc., owner of Maclean's), is expected to reach a record high thanks to its superstar lineup. "Rogers year-up attendance for the women's event was 20 per cent less than the men's," says Bruce Allister, vice president and tournament director of Tennis Canada. "We had

MTV video, making out with Frankie Iglesias (now her boyfriend). 'If you're a guy, you're interested in a couple of fringe sports and that gets it,' says Mike Valiquette, president of Toronto youth marketing firm Youthography. "Tennis is the only sport that tends to bring those two together."

Marketing experts say tennis players are a natural fit for product endorsements because they tend to be a perfect combination of athletes, feminine, youthful, affluent and "It's a sport that really lends itself to women's branding conventionally good-looking," says Valiquette. "Because it's all cardio and comparatively little strength training. Having a long body is really helpful in tennis, whereas in other sports you want a lot more of girthy."

Of course, it's also the sport that lends itself best to fashion. There are no helmets, no bulky padding, no spit-soaked mouthguards. Rather, it's a game in which the traditional uniform is a dirty little secret. "Certainly it was Serena who first marked the presence of fashion in tennis," says Todd Haskins, CEO of Women's Sports Services, a marketing firm in California. In 2003, she pushed the boundaries of convention by wearing a black spaghetti-strap corset to the U.S. Open. Last year, at the same event, she outdid herself by emerging onto the court dressed seemingly for a night of clubbing, in sexy knee-high boots, a black strappy tank-top and a denim skirt and matching jacket. If it's true that a woman's game is closely tied to how she looks—and looks like looks—then it's a shame she didn't win. **F**

GRIDIRON GIRLS

The balls are smaller, the field narrower, but the hits are hard in Canada's first all-women's football league

ABBY MILLER is surely the only ballet dancer-turned-linebacker in Canadian sports history. "My legs are pretty strong and I'm a lot more flexible thanks to the seven years of dance," says the 16-year-old, who ended in her posse's shorts for a pair of football spikes a couple of years ago. "The added strength lets me make that pass, which helps when I'm chasing down a running back." At five-foot-six and 140 lb., Miller doesn't look too intimidating. But in the New Brunswick Women's Football League—Canada's first all-female gridiron—she's a defensive dynamo. Miller and her sister John Buzarenski teammates have been

bushing linebackers with the Fredericton Lady Gladiators and the Moncton Vipers all numbers pursuit of the league's ultimate prize: this weekend's Super Her Bowl.

If you're thinking soft tackles and tamed pug, think again. Many of the women learned the game by holding their own against boys in high school, and they're not afraid to get a bit nasty. "It's a lot tougher than rugby," says Moncton's Mandy Hamilton, 25, a hospital nurse and one of the league's most dangerous running backs. "In gear, players are no cartoon. That me, the lion is hard."

Of course, it's not exactly like men's football. The all-girl game is played with smaller balls, on a narrower field and with eight players, not 12. Players range from age 16 to 20—there's even a mother-daughter combo, Dawn Courtney and Alex MacDonald, who play defence for the Vipers. And while it's primarily a running game, quarterbacks are improving thanks to a rule requiring signal callers to throw at least one pass during every set of four downs. Striving by the defence, however, is far harder. "They don't want the quarterbacks to get too scared," says Miller.

Except for the occasional ankle or wrist sprain, serious injuries are rare. Breasting is the main concern. "Husbands worry that people might start wondering if something is going on at home," laughs Terry McIntyre, who founded the league last year.

So far, the game attracts only a couple of hundred spectators at best, but the appeal goes beyond mere curiosity. Though Canada has only three competitive teams outside the Maritimes—the Calgary Rockies, Edmonton Storm and the Montreal Blizz-



Courtney (in yellow) and daughter Alex are the core of Moncton's impenetrable defence.

in the U.S., the sport has exploded in popularity. This year, 36 teams competed in the National Women's Football Association, which regularly attracts thousands of fans.

Organizers of the NWFFL hope for a bit of that success—and there are some positive signs. Next year, teams from Halifax and Charlottetown plan to join—which will surely spark new rivalries and improve competition. Not to mention, increase the cash take. "I've heard some four-letter words and questioning of a player's heritage out there," says McIntyre, who is retiring this year. "It's only natural when somebody lays a whacking on you that you might not react in the most lady-like way." **F**

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KURT'S FINAL DAZE

After 11 years, there's no closure for Nirvana fans

CAN FRANCES BEAN Cobain overcome the sin of her parents? Although her father, Kurt, selfishly killed himself 11 years ago, her mom's poster boy for depressed and alienated youth act. And while her celebrity biopic case makes Courtney, at supposedly a year older and wiser, her credibility has not a living nose ago. But 12-year-old Frances, as seen in the new magazine photo, looks adored, collected and cool. Certainly not, so far, anything like what Kurt preferred in his teenage wife. "I can't stand the thought of Frances becoming the reasonable, self-destructive, death rocker that I've become."

Could it be that she's actually better off without her dad? The question surfaces in *Last Days*, director Gus Van Sant's take on the final hours of Nirvana's front man. A young record executive (George Clooney) meets Jim Gaudin, of Sonic Youth, who is the former singer's (David Dux) brother. He says he's talked to her on the phone. "I do the voice she likes, it tells her I love her." Let's see: we feel sorry for this girl who's done his last David Dux impression on Gaudin's character's death bed. "Do you tell her I'm sorry that I'm a rock 'n' roll dad?"

Most people don't view Cobain as just another talented junkie. Eleven years after he shot himself at home in Seattle, he's a mythic savior who died for a generation's collective angst—even though one of the reasons he rock life was his hatred of their ideology. In the pushover of rock star death, Cobain is up there, arguably right after Billie and John Lennon and before Jimi, Janis and Janis—and the only one whose death



Pit stars in *Last Days*, a movie that lets you choose your own Cobain demise

was ruled a suicide. And maybe that's the reason it's so hard to get closure: We sit up every possible explanation, every detail of his drug-fueled behavior, and every ridiculous hiccup from those he once associated with.

And there's no shortage of people talking for and about Kurt. In Nick Broomfield's damning 1994 documentary, *Kurt & Courtney*, he argues that the latter was more than

just a few days before the suicide. These conversations were passed on as insight.

Maybe that's the reason Van Sant's movie is so powerful—it doesn't pretend to offer more than an actor, Michael Pitt (Dave's son), who dresses, looks and sounds like Cobain. But without a plot or much dialogue, viewers who retain at least some familiarity with the tormented Kurt are forced to do what they didn't know they wanted to do: envision the last days of Cobain for themselves. As with Van Sant's previous two experimental movies about death, *Gerry* and *Elephant*, *Last Days* is a test of patience. But aspects of it that might be considered frustrating can also be viewed as liberating. Kurt rambles constantly—invisibly you start to make things out; but I doubt I heard what the person next to me did. He roams around the house and woods for an indeterminate amount of time, allowing everyone their own take on how many days or hours he was lost. With the phone rings, it could be Love, Grohl, Novoselic, Kurt's house, his manager or his lawyer on the other end. It's up to you.

But when the character returns to a child's room, gazed at a baby's shoe and struggles to sleep in his daughter's bed, there's a little pleasure left in this choice your-own-Cobain adventure. The one absolute in that Frances had the misfortune of having a dopey-up, unfit father—a guy who would rock 'n' roll, but couldn't save himself. ■

BACKTALK



TV | David James Elliott isn't just another man in uniform

Elliott tackles the tough role of former CFIU Terry Cavanagh in an upcoming film

David James Elliott's amateur football career has been marred by injury. About 30 years ago, he broke his ribs on the high school field. Last month, he hurt himself again—this time on the end zone of Hamilton's Van Wyke Stadium while filming *The Man Who Lost Himself*. "All I had to do was drive across the goal line, but I hit my shoulder the wrong way and popped my collarbone out," says Elliott, who stars in the upcoming CFIU film as Terry Cavanagh, the former CFIU receiver who suffered amnesia following a car crash in 1988.

"This game can be deadly." The Toronto-born actor, best known to TV fans as "that guy in a jug," was always more of an artist than an athlete. In fact, Elliott barely dropped out of high school to front a rock band. These days, his passion for traditions grows he's a jack of all heart. "My first love out, I almost drowned," says Elliott, 44, who's training for an Iron Man event this fall. "I didn't realize I couldn't swim until I got out there. I'm not in danger of drowning anything." Hurting himself, however, is another story. JOHN LITTE

"David's a very athletic guy so I only had to offer him a few tips. Most of them had to do with my personality—how I carry myself and the way that I run and catch a football." —Cavanagh

Music | Rising from the West

You don't expect the band touring with one of the biggest acts in the world to pull out cheap nylon wallets when the breakfast bill arrives. "We should ask for a place for us to crash," jokes Black Mountain keyboardist Jeremy Schwartz, 32, a few hours before opening for Godspeed at Toronto's Air Canada Centre last week. So how did these Vancouverites rise from obscurity to become the North American buffers for Chris Martin and Co.? "Columbia just asked," shrugs 30-year-old drummer Josh Wells.

The quartet, which also includes backup singer Andrew Nelson, 26, and bassist Matt Conrad, 20, is currently at the opposite end of the spectrum



from its previous releases. The sprawling songs on its self-titled debut are dark, drug-soaked and loud like Led Zeppelin—the music is apparently shaggy as the band. Back home, five of the five members work at a mental health facility in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside—they do everything from drink coffee with the homeless to clean a safe injection clinic. And the group shares members with other area bands that are part of the Black Mountain Army, an anti-collective, but don't expect a manifesto. "Work is just much more fun with friends," says frontman Stephen McKeown, 36. "And we get to play them too."



UTOPIA ON THE RIDEAU

Imagining an Ottawa in which politicians aren't so damned political

As the last summer night, a fevered political columnist dreams of an imaginary land where politicians do their best, instead of doing more of the same...

Paul Martin: Ladies and gentlemen, we've had a good caucus discussion today. I want to share a few decisions with you.

You may have been surprised when the Liberal party decided in 2003, after winning three elections in a row, that it was time for a change. You'll be less surprised to hear we need a change now, in 2005. My party has been governing day-in/day-out for far too long. It's

hard for a minority government to think past the next Canadian vote, but it's harder on the nation if we don't try. So we'll return to the full with a "Divine Speech" and a new agenda based on the best of our old agenda: a program recognizing that Canada's greatest resource is the brains of Canadians.

We're going to make "human capital"—giving every Canadian the talent and training to get ahead—the centerpiece of my government's effort. From health to business, to inner-city children with a place to study, to high-schoolers with the infrastruc-



ture they need to understand the value of university education, to researchers who depend on stable funding for their innovations, to lifelong learning that ensures nobody is trapped in a dead-end trade—"No More Left Behind!" will be our watchword.

New a word on management style. Mine has been atrocious. After nine years running just one government department, I tried to run 15 at once. I won't be shuffling my cabinet: we've already had too many rosters learning on the job. Instead, I'll get myself out of cabinet's hair, but my helpers from telling senior bureaucrats how to run their departments, and give my criticism the kind of freedom I used to demand from Jean Chrétien. I'm ending the length of cabinet meetings and the number of cabinet committees is half. I won't get better work out of my transport minister by being my transportation minister and my heritage minister second-guessing him. And I won't get

better work out of Immigration and Heritage until I stop second-guessing them. Unleashing the talent of Canadians begins with unleashing my own ministers.

Stephen Harper: Ladies and gentlemen, we've had a good caucus meeting today. I want to share a few decisions with you.

The other night Laurence told me, "Canadians don't want a sophisticated critique of the government. They don't want endlessly meddling outrage at the government. They want a government." She was right, as usual. I don't know when the next election will be, but I know what I want to do after we win it. You deserve to know, too. That's why my staff is handing out copies of our campaign platform.

It was time to hear myself called "power-hungry" for trying to defund this government—until I realized anyone will look power-hungry if he demands power without explaining how he'll use it. I worried that if

I announced my ideas, the Liberals would steal them. But so what? My ideas are right for Canada. If the Liberals steal them, good, at least they'll be put to work. And if the Liberals won't do what's right for Canada, maybe with your help I will.

Our platform calls for more private-sector involvement in health care, an idea supported by Quebec's Liberal minister of health and practiced by Paul Martin's personal physician. Our platform calls for replacing the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency with a corporate tax-free zone across the Atlantic provinces. That's not my idea. It used to be Scott Brison's when he still called himself a Conservative. Ministry Brison is welcome to steal his idea back. If he won't, Conservatives will just have to cross the floor in far greater numbers—and bring these ideas with us.

Jack Layton: We've had a good caucus meeting. I want to share a few decisions.

I liked the good press we got by giving Paul Martin ideas for a better balanced budget. But I also noticed the glass on the our national polling numbers. In single spring we turned more NDP votes into seats than anyone can remember, yet four out of five Canadian voters won't consider voting for us. I think it's because they've heard us argue, for too long, that government should spend everyone's money on everyone's problems.

I don't know what the other leaders learned from this minority Parliament, but I learned nothing gets done if you try to do everything. My staff is heading out our campaign platform. You'll notice it's last year's platform—New Democrats are big on recycling. You'll also notice that more than two-thirds of our promises from 2004 have been crossed out. We're going to concentrate on a few key areas that matter. If you think they matter too, send more New Democrats to Ottawa.

Be comment: backpage@maclean.ca
Read Paul Wells's writing, "Politics Weekly," at www.macleans.ca/paulwells/



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